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## Germany

**Post:** Berlin

### **Food Retailers demand return to non GE feed**

**Report Categories:**

Biotechnology - GE Plants and Animals

Livestock and Products

Poultry and Products

**Approved By:**

Kelly Stange

**Prepared By:**

Leif Erik Rehder

**Report Highlights:**

The German food retailers have demanded from the German Poultry Association (ZDG) to stop using genetically engineered feed starting from January 1st 2015. According to Lebensmittelzeitung, a working group "Soy in Animal Feed" was established with the long term goal to abandon GE feed totally in poultry and livestock production in Germany.

**General Information:**

By broad consensus, the German food retailers have demanded that the German Poultry Association (ZDG) to stop using genetically engineered (GE) feed for both egg and poultry meat production, starting January 1, 2015. That is the date when the retailers want to receive GE-free fed products again.

After months of confrontation, the demand by the German retailers marks a turnaround. The discussions started in February 2014 when the ZDG withdrew its 14-year-old commitment to only use non-GE soybeans in poultry feed. The step was based on the supply shortage of non-GE soy, the risk of contamination and the legal uncertainty associated with it. (For more information please see GAIN report: [Poultry Industry Gives Up GMO-Free Promise](#))

The measure provided for plenty of resentment among large and powerful retail giants like Kaufland, Rewe and Edeka. Even large ZDG members like Plukon and Deutsche Frühstücksei did not follow their association's lead. According to Lebensmittelzeitung, Janning, CEO of ZDG, will no longer rule out a return of the entire industry to feeding non-GMO: "We are not categorically against it." However, he noted that first the critical points should be examined without prejudice.

For this purpose, a working group "Soy in Animal Feed" was established under the auspices of the QS animal welfare initiative. This is where the retailer representatives defined the long-term goal to abandon genetic engineering in the feed rations of the entire animal husbandry, including the feeding of pigs and cattle. The production of poultry meat is given priority.

Task and time schedules were agreed on providing for representative analyses for contaminations in feed as well as the clarification of legal issues in regards to labeling. If the working group comes to the conclusion that GE-free feeding is possible, Janning considers an industry agreement to be the right way to proceed. The starting point could then be the new soy harvest 2015.

**Background Information**

Public rejection of genetically engineered plants is widespread in Germany. Germany, nonetheless, is a major livestock producer and is dependent upon imported soybeans and soybean meal as a feed protein source. Germany consumes more than 6 million metric tons (MT) of soybean meal equivalent annually, nearly all of it produced from GE varieties. The main suppliers are Argentina, Brazil and the United States. Soybeans are the largest U.S. agricultural export to Germany; official data suggest the U.S. share of the German soybean market has increased to 25 % in 2013. The withdrawal of ZDG's commitment in February 2014 opened a new 0.8 million MT soybean meal market to U.S. suppliers. The demand for non-GE feed by the retail sector puts the poultry feed market, as well as the whole market, at risk. (For more information please see GAIN report: [Germany Agricultural Biotechnology Annual](#))